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SUBJECT: Background Statement on Lumber and Lumber Products from Farm Woodlands.

FIELD DISTRIBUTION: War Board Members, Extension Editors, SCS Regional Information Chiefs, FDA Regional Marketing Reports Chiefs, BAE Regional Analysts, FSA Regional Information Chiefs, and FCA Information Agents.

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Shortages of lumber and other forest products threaten to impede our war program. On the basis of actual production to date and estimated output for the balance of the year, the total volume of forest products in 1943 will fall below military needs and essential civilian requirements.

The nation's farmers, already exerting mighty efforts to produce food, fiber, and oil crop, are also being asked to help relieve the critical wood situation. By spending as few as four or five extra days in the woods this fall and winter, farmers can get out the additional lumber, logs, pulpwood, mine props, and other forest products needed to speed the end of the war.

The production of wood from farms is an integral part of food production. The success of our food program depends upon an adequate supply of lumber for boxes, baskets, and crates to ship food and farm equipment, to build animal and poultry houses, to store grain and to construct railway cars and the many other facilities essential for producing and marketing food.

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A Critical Situation

The War Production Board has requested the Department of Agriculture and the War Food Administration to do everything practical to increase the production of forest products.

Until Pearl Harbor, the nation's forests were regarded as a great reservoir of material which could be tapped almost at will. During 1941, our total lumber production of 36 billion board feet supplemented by imports of 1.3 billion feet approximately met our requirements. But during 1942, despite curtailment of many normal uses, our production of 34.8 billion feet of lumber plus imports of 1 billion feet fell short by 6 billion feet of meeting the needs. We made up the shortage from carryover stocks. Now, however, these stocks are the lowest on record and cannot support additional withdrawals at the 1942 rate.

Although the bare essential needs for lumber for 1943 are estimated at 32 billion feet, the situation is still critical. Wood is listed with aluminum, copper, and steel as an essential war material. Says Under Secretary of War Patterson: "Lumber comes close to the heart of our whole war program. There are 1,200 different items of military and naval equipment that can use lumber."

The Needs

Estimated Minimum Requirements, 1943

Lumber (million board feet)	32,000
Box and crating	
Agriculture Products	2,500
Other civilian uses	3,300
Military	5,200
Factory Uses	4,100
Civilian Construction	9,900
Military and Lend-Lease	7,000
Pulpwood (thousand cords)	12,270
Veneer Logs (million board feet)	1,722
Fuel wood (thousand cords)	85,000
Fence posts, poles, cross ties, (hewn),	
piling (million pieces)	351
Distillation and tanning (thousand cords)	1,900
Misc. logs and bolts (million board feet)	504

(The above figures are based on scheduled military needs and estimates which are subject to revision. No allowance is made for unusual emergencies.)

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The War Uses

Lumber. This situation is especially critical. The War Production Boards believes this requirement may go up to 35 billion feet. Present minimum requirements are divided 40 percent for direct military and export needs and 60 percent for essential civilian use.

Here are some of the many war uses for lumber --- airplane and glider construction, ship decking, torpedo boats, sub chasers, dry docks, tool handles, war plants, warehouses, defense housing, truck bodies, boxing and crating, hangars, and pontoons.

Pulpwood. Another serious shortage threatening. It will take 2 1-4 million cords of pulpwood to make the paper to package food, supplies, and munition for overseas shipment. Large quantities are needed for the production of smokeless powder, shell cases, parachutes, photographic film and paper, medical supplies, and plastics.

Veneer and Plywood. Most of the softwood veneer produced in the West is used in the form of plywood for construction of trainer planes, offices, warehouses, barracks, hutments, torpedo boats and other marine craft. Port Orford cedar veneer is used for battery separators. Hardwood veneer and plywood is used for many of the same purposes as softwood. Present emphasis is on high quality logs for aircraft and boat veneer in the form of parts, such as propellers, wing coverings, fuselage, motor cowlings, gun turrets, and small boats.

Charcoal. This wood product is vitally important in the metals and chemicals industries. It is used for smelting ores and for making special metals and alloys (copper, brass, bronze, high-grade steel), for making chemicals used in the manufacture of rayon for tire cords and parachutes, for purification purposes, for munitions, guns, curing of meat, livestock feeds, and seed inoculants. A cord of wood will produce about 40 bushels of charcoal (18-20 pounds to a bushel). Charcoal is made from both hardwoods and softwoods (usually pine).

Fuel Wood. Critical deficiencies in the production of fuel wood are evident in the Northeast (six New England states and New York), the Lake States (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan), and the Western states (Washington, Oregon, and parts of California and Idaho). Deficiencies also exist in several other localized areas and may become more critical before the end of next winter. The inadequate supplies are largely caused by lack of labor to cut wood for fuel. These shortages may be intensified by coal shortages which may develop in certain areas.

The fuel wood requirements for 1943-44 are estimated at 85 million cords. However, field reports indicate that production in some areas is only 50 to 75 percent of normal. Fuel wood material is plentiful in most sections of the United States and should be used whenever possible to conserve coal and oil.

Other Forest Products. Adequate supplies must be maintained to fill large demands for railroad cross ties, mine timbers, posts, piling, tool handles, and cooperage stock. Railroads are having trouble getting enough ties for necessary track maintenance at a time when rail traffic is at record levels.

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Why the Lag in Output of Forest Products?

1. Shortage of labor in the mills and in the woods.
2. Problems in the procurement and maintenance of machinery and equipment, particularly for trucks, tires, and tractors. Situation improving.
3. Marketing difficulties. The farmer needs to be advised what products are required for war purposes, and how and where to market them at a fair price.
4. Reluctance of many farmers to sell merchantable timber for fear their woodlands will be ruined. Farmers should be assured that their woodland can be cut over on a selection basis without ruining it and should be given assistance in marking and marketing timber.

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Farm Woodlands As a Source of Forest Products. Prior to the war, one-third of our forest products came from the 139 million acres of commercial farm woodlands.

It is estimated that in the Northeast, 56 percent of the sawlog production comes from farms; in the South and Appalachian region, 45 percent; in Central and Prairie States, 90 percent; and in the Lake States, 12 to 16 percent. Likewise, a WPB survey indicates that farm woodlands produce 38 percent of the total U. S. supply of pulpwood. Fuel wood and logs for many specialty products, such as dogwood for shuttles and walnut for gun stocks and veneer, come almost entirely from farms.

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What Farmers Can Do to Relieve the Present Crisis. Because of the critical need for more wood for war, the Department of Agriculture, at the request of the War Production Board, has launched a wartime drive for increased timber production, and a special Department campaign is now getting under way to stimulate production from farms, primarily in the forested areas east of the Great Plains. In this campaign the Forest Service, Extension Service, S.C.S., A.A.A. and other agencies of the Department are cooperating. State and County War Boards will be expected to arrange for active local conduct of the campaign in all areas where farm woodlands can make a substantial contribution. The farm timber production campaign is directed especially to assist small forest land or woodland owners in proper management, harvesting, and marketing practices. Technical foresters of the Forest Service, Extension Service, and SCS will be available in many areas to help farm woodland owners find the best markets for their timber and advise them on cutting problems. Farmers can get the benefit of this assistance by contacting their County War Boards. The emergency program also seeks to reach the operators of small sawmills, of whom there are an estimated 30,000 in the eastern half of the country.

It is estimated that 3.5 million farms have woodlands, most of which could yield marketable products. Farmers own around 30 percent of the forest lands in this country.

Besides meeting the critical needs for more lumber and other forest products, extra effort by farmers in their woodlands during the rest of this year will increase farm income.

Because of the tremendous demand for forest products for immediate use and to replenish depleted stocks, farmers are urged to produce as much as possible of lumber and other forest products. However, no farmer should cut his woodlands destructively. He should find a definite market for his timber before cutting and he should cut without jeopardizing the future timber productivity of the land.